

DATE: February 13, 2013

TO: The Michigan Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Environment and Great Lakes

FROM: Kim Herman, 5257 JJ .5 Lane, Garden, MI 49835

RE: Testimony SB 78 Sen. Casperson A bill to prohibit DNR from designating or promoting biodiversity diversity and limits biological diversity from list of state forest management goals.

Please accept my testimony regarding SB 78. **I am against SB 78 and any changes that will limit the Department of Natural Resources from managing for native biodiversity.**

The benefits to the people of the state of Michigan and future generations by moving strongly ahead with managing for biodiversity on our state forest lands and other state lands are immeasurably great. First and foremost the collaborative effort of the many stakeholders involved in the biodiversity planning process is unprecedented and supports Michigan's State Forest dual sustainable Forestry Certification under the Sustainable Forestry Initiative and the Forest Stewardship Council. **To pass SB 78** after so much work and effort by talented and dedicated scientists, citizens, the forest products industry and conservationists **will jeopardize our Michigan's sustainable forest certificates and the ability to market and sell our Michigan forest products.**

More now than ever, the State of Michigan and Michigan Department of Natural Resources must recognize the importance of sustaining and managing healthy and diverse ecosystems for the natural services they provide including: ground water recharge, watershed health, maintaining pollinators and sustaining forest health. Genetic variation in our state forests maintains forest productivity, disease resistant trees and resistance to invasive species. Further maintaining species diversity in our state forests, parks and game areas supports native plants and animals, common or rare.

I often think about how much money and resources go into maintaining human health, just in the United States. We as humans represent one organism, yes a very special one, among many on this earth. As I age I grieve when young people I have known, in their thirties, forties and fifties pass on. I cannot help but wonder at how helpless we find ourselves in staving off human suffering, when billions of dollars go annually towards medical research on diseases such as diabetes, arthritis and cancer.

Similarly, I value my experiences working and recreating (hunting, fishing, camping) on our state lands, in our Michigan ecosystems – forests, dunes, lakes and rivers and marvel at their complexity. I realize humbly, how little we really know about how it all works together. I wonder we do not realize how important managing our state lands and resources for Michigan's biodiversity is at this critical point in time to the future of our own life, the quality of which we so often take for granted here in Michigan – with its clean and abundant water and public lands. And even with our best efforts, over 20 percent of our native flora (plants) is already listed as endangered, threatened or special concern. All species, common or rare, depend on intact, healthy and managed ecosystems to survive. **To pass this bill will further endanger already imperiled ecosystems and species and immeasurably hurt the health of our state forests and wildlife lands.**

**Further, I urge you to provide greater funding and resources to all of Michigan Department of Natural Resources Programs involved in managing for Biodiversity.** I ask you to seek and secure funding for additional inventory by the Michigan Natural Features Inventory and to further important management needs such as prescribed fire, forest health and invasive species monitoring and control in our state forests, wildlife areas and parks. **To pass SB 78 will jeopardize existing and future federal funding for the management of wildlife (game and non-game), forests, and habitat on our state lands.**

I am a resident of Michigan's Upper Peninsula and am familiar with much of our state lands in both the lower and upper peninsula having worked in and recreated in our state forests, wildlife areas and parks much of my life. I hold a BA in Biology from Grand Valley State University and an MS in Botany/Plant Ecology from Michigan

State University. I am a co-founder of the Wildflower Association of Michigan, Michigan Invasive Species Council, and Southern Michigan Prescribed Fire Council. I served as a board member for 15 years and within that time for four years as the national President of the Natural Areas Association. Those who know me, realize I am pragmatic in my practice and views regarding natural resource management and conservation.

To pass SB 78 is analogous to spending all the capital in our savings accounts. To manage our state forests and all our state lands sustainably, including biodiversity conserves our capital and grows interest for today and future generations.

Thank you for considering my testimony and making it part of the public record for this hearing.

**I strongly urge you not to pass SB 78 bill in any form.**

Sincerely,

Kim Herman  
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